

Saturday (11<sup>th</sup>), 9.30  
am, ED 210-212

## **Mentoring for Future Healthcare Missionaries GMHC 2023**

Open with prayer... for guidance as we seek God's will in serving Him.

Hi, my name is Neil Thompson. I'll start with a mentoring story:

Several years ago, a Denver Seminary student got in touch to ask me to mentor him. I later found out that every student needed to be mentored for one semester in order to graduate. I said yes and started the process. His main concern was how to be more diligent in all areas of life.

As we got to know each other he and talked about his life, I sensed that most of his issues related to his marriage, how to find God's leading, where and when. I kept thinking: what part of the Bible to use, study or what book might be most helpful? It was a very instructive process in which we both learned a lot about each other and life.

Here are some of his reflections on the experience:

The mentoring experience was the most transformative part of the semester overall. The mentor provided incredible insights and asked probing questions. He was able to see areas of my life that I hadn't realized. He was able to help me in areas where I was wrestling, like "What does it look like to lead my wife?" His wife once told him, "I really like you when you're on vacation." They are doing well now. He now leads an international leadership ministry.

This is what one kind of mentoring looks like. Now, let's take a journey half way around the world to Thailand, which will segue to leadership and mentoring...

I served with OMF as a general surgeon at Manorom Christian Hospital in Central Thailand. That small hospital started as a complement to pioneer evangelistic thrust that started about 1950—a time when there were no known Christians or medical care in the area. The hospital was started in 1956 to follow Jesus' model of teaching, preaching and healing among the towns of Galilee (Matthew 9.35-38)

I joined the Manorom team in 1978 and worked there for over 20 years. When I went I wanted nothing to do with administration or leadership. But if you're at a place long enough in missions, you will be asked to do things you never thought you'd be doing! That's what happened to me. As I like to joke, I got moved from the Operating Room to the Board Room! OMF had just started its in-house leadership training at about that time.

One of the exercises of that training fascinated me: making a timeline of my life. We were told to divide our lives into development patterns: home & adolescence, education, work and advancement, etc. Then, we were to think back to the people & events who most influenced us during those periods: parents & siblings; SS & VBS teachers; school teachers and coaches; professors; college friends; who helped you get a job and others who influenced your life.

I was captivated by the exercise and stayed up past midnight thinking back to all the people who had influenced me, most of whom I had taken for granted. The SS teacher who stayed in touch long beyond high school, sent me a Christian magazine with articles on how to defend my faith at a secular college, then invited me to a mission conference! What my wrestling coach taught me went far beyond what he taught us on the mats! A surgeon & professor who was gruff on the outside but who cared deeply for his surgical residents.

I not only saw these mentors and influencers in my life in a new light, but also developed a new sense of gratitude for how they had invested in me. None of these were formal mentors, but each had made his/ her mark on this young guy!

Then there were other great influences in my life like conferences, books, CMDA, local CMDA doctors, some of whom had been missionaries or who had taken ST trips and told their stories. God

continued to use people— and events like this continued throughout my life in Thailand and since returning to the US.

In a brilliant article by **Ralph Winter** nearly 30 years ago, he said that of all those “called” into missionary service only 1 of 100 make it! Why? Because of the lack of mobilizers, or mentors. He went on to describe the strategic priority of mentors to walk with those who believe that God has called them to serve him in missions. If he is close to being right, that means that only 1% of those here at GMHC and who feel called to serve will actually make it! **So, my desire in this session is two-fold:**

1. That all of you who desire to have mentors will find them; and
2. That those of you who can be mentors will do so! So, this is the **WHY—the purpose—of this talk!**

Of all the WHO’s who are involved in mentoring, the most fundamental is God. Bringing glory to Him is our ultimate goal. Becoming a medical missionary is one of the most rewarding—but also one of the most difficult—things you could choose to do with your life! Go for it! See yourself as being on a journey. If it hasn’t started yet, let it start today: Keep Psalm 84.5 in mind. **“Blessed are those whose strength is in the Lord, whose hearts are set on pilgrimage.”** (Psalm 84.5) So now let’s prepare for the journey!

WHAT is mentoring? We can look at mentoring as a “relational experience in which one person empowers or helps another by sharing God-given resources”. **Mentoring involves transfers: transfers of power (empowering), of character qualities, values, skills, experience and resources.** The mentoring relationship can be started personally by phone, email, Zoom, personal visits or a combination of the above. Let’s use the mnemonic **ICE-ING** to help us understand what mentoring is: Information, Communication, Encouragement, Inspiration, Networking and Guidance. It is usually a person, but as I said before, it may be other resources like books, conferences, talks, sermons and the like.

Several years ago a pre-med student who was interested in HCMs asked me if there is a difference between MD and DOs—and if a DO degree is accepted in other countries. I gave her the information: They are equivalent and both are accepted. What she needed was...

**Information.** And she needed accurate information. As opposed to this medical student! She wrote:

“1. First of all, can you please pray for me? I keep praying for discernment on choosing the right specialty. I think everyone including my parents advised me NOT to go into surgery. I just want to do what God wants except I do not know what he wants me to do.

2. Do you agree that having a family and being a surgeon is impossible?

3. I was also told that surgery is not a great field for international ministry because...”

You can see that this med student had already received a lot of inaccurate information from family, friends and colleagues who seemed to be trying to scare her out of medical missions! I guess they did: she went into Internal Medicine. I hope she’s still interested in HCMs.

### **Communication:**

Set aside the time necessary to meet, to understand the mentee’s needs. Beyond the actual mentoring, develop a relationship with the mentee. You will learn from each other on your respective journeys.

One pre-med student wrote, “What else am I forgetting in this process??? :-) It seems like there is a lot to think about and decide. From your experience, what are some things that would be helpful to remember during this time - about the Lord and about calling in general?”

What she needed most at that time was...

### **Encouragement.**

Mentoring is not just provision of information. It’s also building a relationship where both parties learn and grow. Sometimes, it’s just a pat on the back, a Bible verse or an insight that’s needed.

**Inspiration:**

Beyond encouragement for the journey is providing inspiration for a vision for serving. This could be a story from your experience, or briefly telling the story of an inspiring medical missionary, like Dr. Ida Scudder or Dr. Tom Hale.

**Networking:**

This might mean connecting the mentee with people and resources (articles, websites, books, etc.) I recommend joining CMDA, or attending GMHC to every medical student I meet. Open a door. Be an advocate or a sponsor.

Another pre-med student asked: “What are the most important components I should consider in a [medical] school? Christian fellowship? Cost (financial)? Location? Match rate (residency)? Program? Name?” What she needed was...

**Guidance.**

Reflect on your life for a minute. WHO and WHAT were your mentors? Think of people who spent time with you, who mentored you before you were 20 years old—and someone who has mentored you since then. It might have been a conscious mentoring relationship, or one that happened and you didn't realize it until after it was over!

Next, think of WHO were some of the great mentors of the past? For example, Aristotle, Socrates and Plato. Biblical characters include Moses (Joshua), Naomi (Ruth), Elijah (Elisha), Jesus (disciples), Barnabas (Paul) and Paul (Timothy, Titus). Look at the very different personalities we find in Barnabas, Paul, Timothy and Titus!

**Barnabas:** put his life on the line as he “sponsored” Paul in his early days after conversion.

**Paul:** talented, smart, visionary, team builder.

**Timothy:** timid, quiet and reserved—but ministered effectively in Ephesus, Corinth and Philippi...

**Titus:** Talented, eager, responsive and responsible as he ministered in Corinth and Crete.

**So, next, WHAT in your lives needs to be mentored?** (Write on whiteboard.)

**Personal growth and maturity:** “Know yourself.” (Plato, Jesus, St. Paul—Romans 12:3) How do you do that? Learn from older, wiser friends, family, mentors. Personality Tests, like DISC and Myers-Briggs personality profile tests. Understand how God has “wired” you. What are your strengths, weaknesses? This is not just a navel-gazing exercise that is “all about me”. It is about understanding God, His Purposes, how he's made me and how I can then live, work and minister with other people, some very like me and others very different from me!

**Physical:** Health & medical issues (Eat healthier. Control cholesterol. Dental work, etc.)

**Spiritual:** the one most important determinant of a missionary's preparation for service. Most mission boards will require knowledge and expertise in handling the Bible and being able to teach it. The Bible is our authority; we need to know it well enough to “feed” ourselves and to know when we are confronted with heresy. Prayer should be a vital force in your life. Fellowship, worship—the spiritual disciplines. WHO challenges you in your spiritual life?

**Marriage & Singleness Issues:** I'm afraid of being lonely. Should I get married before I go, or just go? (Note: No one size fits all in dealing with people.)

**Professional:** Medical training is long and arduous. You need perseverance! You also need to be thinking about your specialty and how you will use that to serve the Lord.

**Communication:** learn how to communicate your ideas via spoken and written word.

**Leadership:** Most missionaries are asked to work in areas that they never anticipated. One of these is leadership. David Stevens covers many of these issues in his book: *Beyond Medicine: What Else You Need to Know to Be a Healthcare Missionary*.

**World, worldview:** Understand that Americans are a very ethnocentric people. We live in a society where most people have never been out of the country; some may have never visited another state. We need to have a world focus, be a World Christian who has a worldview that reflects a practicing knowledge of what's going on in the world! How many countries, how many people groups, languages, who are the least reached, the unreached? What is your worldview? Can you articulate it?

**Vision:** What's out there? What are opportunities and needs? E.g., books, conferences, godly mentors & colleagues, *Perspectives*, *Urbana*, etc., can provide guidance at various times in your lives. God will give you a vision for your life.

Another prism through which to view mentoring needs is...

**“What are the obstacles to serving in medical mission?”** There is overlap with what we just did, but this is helpful as well.

- **How to find God's will** (Note that God wants you to find Him and His will more than you do!)
- **Family support/ resistance:** Books like *Following Jesus Without Dishonoring My Parents* can help.
- **Finances: personal debt, financial planning, fundraising.** A student wrote, “How should I deal with feeling burdened about taking on so much debt? How do I live frugally without becoming a miser? How do I continue to grow a generous heart while in med school?”
- **Family: Marriage, parenting, singleness issues**
- **Bible training:** knowing, understanding and applying the Bible well
- **Finding a mission agency:** GMHC is a great place to network, get acquainted with agency reps.
- **Cross-cultural training:** most likely to be introduced by your mission agency.
- **Fear**—of what? (ridicule, unknown, parents, peers?) Several years ago in Singapore, Wannee and I led a Missions Interest Group at OMF headquarters one evening. About 15 young Singaporean Christians attended. They had already been on short-term trips. One girl said one of her “obstacles” to going was fear: “I don't want to go.” So why she was there that night? She said, “I don't really want to be a missionary. I just know I should be here.” She obeyed.

The purpose of this session is not to answer all your questions, but to point you in the right direction, identify the need for mentors, and what resources that are available. I've mentioned books several times. Here are a few of my favorites (all listed in “Resources”)... In his book, *On Being a Missionary*, Dr. Thomas Hale says, “Medical missions, whether domestic or foreign, is the most useful, fulfilling, and challenging career open to any Christian health professional.” (p. 275)

Two years ago, CMDA CEO Dr. Mike Chupp gave a talk on mentoring. It was excellent and is available on the [medicalmissions.com](http://medicalmissions.com) GMHC website. In addition to his talk and ppt, there are mentor manuals from his mission agency, WGM, from CMDA and from Denver Seminary, which

has an excellent mentoring program. So, find the list of “Mentoring Resources:” there is a wealth of information that will educate, challenge and inspire you.

Are you wondering if God is calling you to serve as a healthcare missionary? How will you find out? HOW will you find God’s will in the midst of all of life? Some of the basic answers, briefly, are to make good choices. Spend your time wisely. Know God’s Word. Spend time with believers. Find books that will inform and inspire you.

Conclusion: What if—through intentional mentoring—Ralph Winter’s statistic of only 1 in 100 getting to the mission field, increased to 5 or 10 in 100? That would be a 5 to 10-fold increase. You could be part of that blessing and advance of the Kingdom! Either by being mentored and following your vision, or by actively mentoring someone desiring to serve the Lord in medical missions! **We want to enable you to follow your dream/ your vision of serving the Lord in medical missions. Mentoring can be a strategic part of your journey!**

Q&A. s

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## **Mentoring Resources**

*Ask A Missionary*, John McVay, IVP Books, 2012; <https://askamissionary.com>

The Best Mentorships Help Both People Grow: <https://hbr.org/2022/01/the-best-mentorships-help-both-people-grow>

*Beyond Medicine: What Else You Need to Know to Be a Healthcare Missionary*, David Stevens, CMDA, 2012  
CMDA resources: <https://cmda.org>

*Editorial Comment [On Mission Mobilization]*, Missions Frontiers Bulletin, Ralph D. Winter, 10 January 1995

*Following Jesus without Dishonoring your Parents*, Jeanette Yep (Ed), IVP, 1998

Healthcare mission resources: <https://www.medicalmissions.com>

How to Find a Mentor: <https://hbr.org/2021/03/whats-the-right-way-to-find-a-mentor>

Joshua Project: Unreached Peoples of the World: <https://joshuaproject.net>

*Level 5 Leadership*, Jim Collins, Harvard Business Review, January 2001

*Mentoring Christ Followers in Healthcare*, Mike Chupp, MD (GMHC, 2021);

<https://www.medicalmissions.com/resources/38074/mentoring-christ-followers-in-healthcare> (Note resources under “DOWNLOADS.”)

Mentorship in Uncertain Times: <https://cmda.org/mentorship-in-uncertain-times/>

*On Being a Missionary*, Thomas Hale, William Carey Library Pub, 2008

*Operation World*, Jason Mandryk, IVP (7<sup>th</sup> Ed.), 2010, <https://operationworld.org>

*Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, Stephen Covey, Simon & Schuster, 1989 (30th Anniversary Edition, 2020)

## **A Short Medical Mission Bibliography**

### **Africa**

*Miracle at Tenwick: The Life of Dr. Ernie Steury*, Gregg Lewis, Discovery House Publishers, 2007 (The story of Tenwick Hospital and its founder; Kenya)

*Another Hand on Mine*, William J. Petersen, Mastof Press, 1967 (Biography of Dr. Carl Becker, pioneer missionary to Democratic Republic of Congo)

## **China**

*A Foreign Devil in China*, John Pollock, World Wide Publications, 1988 (life of missionary surgeon, L. Nelson Bell, Billy Graham's father-in-law)

*Grasping Heaven*, Annelies and Einar Wilder-Smith, Deep River Books, 2010 (The story of Tami Fisk, "a young doctor's journey to China and beyond")

*Peter Parker and the Opening of China*, Edward V. Gulick, Harvard Press, 1973 (Pioneer medical missionary, 1830s)

*We Signed Away Our Lives: How One Family Gave Everything for the Gospel*, Kari Torjesen Malcolm, IVP, 1990 (The story of Evergreen, Taiyuan, Shansi, China)

## **India**

*Dr. Ida*, Dorothy C. Wilson, Hodder & Stoughton, 1959 (The life of Dr. Ida Scudder, founder of Vellore Christian Hospital)

*Punjab Pioneer*, Charles Reynolds, Word Books, 1968 (The life of Edith Brown, founder of Ludhiana Medical Hospital, north India)

*Ten Fingers for God*, Dorothy C. Wilson, Paul Brand Publishing, 1989 (life of Paul Brand, pioneer leprosy surgeon and researcher)

## **Nepal**

*Don't Let the Goats Eat the Loquat Trees*, Thomas Hale, Zondervan, 1986 (A missionary surgeon's experience in Nepal, autobiographical)

*Living Stones of the Himalayas*, Thomas Hale, Zondervan, 1993. (His stories reveal the power of medical ministry in this remote, enchanted land.)

*On Being a Missionary*, Thomas Hale, William Carey Library Pub, 2003

*On the Far Side of Liglig Mountain*, Thomas Hale, Zondervan, 1989 (Story of the Hales' "experiences in bringing western medicine to people who distrust—even fear—the introduction of different ideas...".)

## **Thailand**

*Mo Bradley and Thailand*, Donald C. Lord, Eerdmans, 1969 (Life of Dan Beach Bradley, pioneer medical missionary, 1835-1860s)

*More Than Skin Deep*, Margaret Armitage, OMF Books, 1988 (True story of two leprosy patients and pioneer medical missions in Central Thailand)

## **General**

*The Contribution of Medical Missions: The Intercultural Transfer of Standards and Values*, Christoffer H. Grundmann, in *Academic Medicine* (vol. 66, no. 12, p. 731), 1991.

*Medical missions: what it is and the history behind the movement*, Will Rogers:

<https://www.medicalmissions.com/resources/23185/medical-missions>

*Sent to Heal! Emergence and Development of Medical Missions*, Christoffer H. Grundmann, University Press of America, 2005 (2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 2014)

## OUTLINE

- I. Introduction & Scripture (Psalm 84.5)
  - A. My story
  - B. Ralph Winter challenge
  - C. WHY are you here? WHAT do you want to do with your life? HOW do you plan to get there?
  
- II. Who were some of the great mentors of the past?
  - A. Hx: Aristotle, Socrates, Plato
  - B. Bible: Jesus (disciples), Barnabas (Paul), Paul (Timothy, Titus)
  - C. Kinds of mentors
  
- III. What does Mentoring mean?
  - A. It could mean a formal mentoring, with course work. But
  - B. I mean “ICE-ING”...
  - C. Share what I learned here 2 years ago. Share what I passed on to John McVay, which is now incorporated into the Elements guidebook and the website.
  
- IV. What/ Who needs mentoring? (Two models)
  - A. The breadth of our lives: proactive
    - 1. Personal & relational (Emotional)
    - 2. Physical
    - 3. Spiritual
    - 4. Professional (including Communication & Leadership)
    - 5. Worldview
    - 6. Vision
  - B. The Obstacles and Objections in Life
    - 1. How to find God’s call
    - 2. Family support/ resistance
    - 3. Finances: personal debt, financial planning, fundraising
    - 4. Marriage, family, singleness issues
    - 5. Parenting issues
    - 6. Bible training
    - 7. Cross-cultural training
    - 8. Finding an agency (or not)
    - 9. Fear
  
- V. Other mentors: Books—A Short Bibliography
  
- VI. Stories
  
- VII. Comments
  
- VIII. Conclusion & Challenge
  
- IX. Questions